

OSHA's Revised Haz-Com Standard

“EXPLODING BOMB”



Today we will discuss the “Exploding Bomb” pictogram (see pictogram below). Products bearing this pictogram are capable of exploding. While we may think of materials such as dynamite or gun powder as being explosive (which they are), materials that are classified as self-reactive (like picric acid) and organic peroxides are included in this category too.

Containers displaying the “Exploding Bomb” pictogram on their product labels contain an explosive substance or mixture that is a solid or liquid which, in itself, is capable of a violent chemical reaction that can produce gas at such a temperature and pressure and at such a rapid speed that it can cause damage to the surroundings. The dangers of an explosive material could include excessive force from the blast (a shock wave), fire, and/or projectiles.

Products bearing the “Exploding Bomb” pictogram may be relatively rare in most workplaces, but if any container does display this particular warning icon, it is vitally important to pay attention to the Warning Statements that appear on the container label. For example, explosions involving some materials could be triggered by improper handling techniques; sometimes just dropping or bumping up against the container or package may be all it takes for the product inside to detonate. And in other cases, a spark or flame making contact with the material might be all that is needed to set off the explosion.

To help prevent explosions, always pay particular attention to the Precautionary Statements appearing on the label for explosive materials, as they list specific recommended measures that should be followed to minimize the potential for an explosion during use, storage, or disposal of that product. Examples of precautions listed for items with the “Exploding Bomb” pictogram may include “Keep away from heat/sparks/open flames/hot surfaces”, “No smoking”, “Keep/Store away from clothing/.../combustible materials”, “Keep only in original container”, “Wear protective gloves/eye protection/face protection”, or “Store at temperatures not to exceed 70 degrees Fahrenheit”. Additional information about precautions to follow when handling or storing explosive products is also available on the product’s Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

This particular pictogram should help you quickly recognize products which present explosion hazards (if possible, give specific examples of such products present at your job site). OSHA has given manufacturers and importers of all hazardous products until June 1, 2015 to make the full transition to this new labeling system. So in the meantime, watch for the “Exploding Bomb” pictogram to appear on containers at work, and heed the warnings and precautions provided for use of that product.

EXPLODING BOMB

- Explosives
- Self-Reactives
- Organic Peroxides

